(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas *vide* Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 580(E) dated 20.09.2006 has directed that subject to commercial viability, oil marketing companies shall sell 5 per cent of ethanol blended petrol throughout the country w.e.f. 1st Nov., 2006 as per Bureau of Indian Standard Specification, except North Eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep due to logistic reasons.

(b) and (c) The programme is currently operational in ten States namely: Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Delhi, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Maharashtra (partial), Andhra Pradesh (partial) and Bihar (partial). However the programme has not been implemented in the States of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Kerala and in the Union territories Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Chandigarh and Pondichery due to various taxes and levies imposed by the respective State Governments on import of ethanol from other ethanol producing States.

Cooperation with Russia in energy sector

*466. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have signed an argreement with Russia on cooperation in energy sector during the recent visit of the President of Russia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have made an assessment of the commercial benefits to India of such an agreement; and

(d) whether such agreements enhance the energy security of the country?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (d) During the recent visit of President of Russia in January 2007 no agreement was signed by Ministry of Petroleum and

Natural Gas. However, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rosneft on 25.01.2007. As per MoU, Rosneft and ONGC would form two Joint Study Groups (JSG). One for upstream and the other for downstream activities. The JSGs would jointly study the possibilities for mutual projects in exploration, production and marketing as well as other projects related to hydrocarbon industry, including joint bidding for oil and gas stake in Russia, India and third countries. In addition, the two companies also agreed to jointly explore the options for participation in refining and retail marketing projects in India, including integration of other companies in India. In addition, ONGC has signed an MoU with Gazprom on 21.2.2005. MoU with Gazprom envisages studying the prospects of joint participation in oil and gas projects in India, Russia and third countries.

The two MoU's are expected to bring ONGC closer to the two national oil and gas companies of Russia resulting in joint operations and possibly acquisition of further oil and gas properties in Russia and other countries for enhancing India's oil security.

Promotion of tourism in North-Eastern States

*467. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the schemes sanctioned by Government to promote tourism in North-Eastern States specially in Sikkim;

(b) the assistance provided by Government to these State Governments during each of the last three years alongwith the amount spent by these State Governments for the purpose; and

(c) the steps taken in that regard during the Ninth Plan and proposed for Tenth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The schemes formulated by the Ministry of Tourism under which projects are sanctioned for development and promotion of tourism in the country are as follows:—

(i) Product/Infrastructure Development for Destination and Circuits.

(ii) Large Revenue Generating Projects.